

# THE INTERCHANGE

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS' EMPLOYEES' NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER, 1989

## GVW Kids



Over 30 young visitors from the 3R's Preschool in Helena gathered at the North Hill GVW Weigh Station north of Helena last August. Their morning was spent crawling in and out of semis and GVW cars, touring the weigh station, seeing how the scales operate and having a truly hands-on experience. They were impressed by the big trucks, but liked the patrol car sirens, too. So much so, in fact, that neighbors called to ask why the sirens didn't stop for an hour!

Ed Hudson, Compliance Bureau Chief, was amazed by the quality of questions the kids asked and the safety facts they remembered. Hudson feels the visits are "good for the trucking industry, good for the department and good for the kids."

Trucks were provided for the visit by North Hill Truck Lines, Mergenthaler's, C. F. Trucking and Watkins & Shepard Trucking.

## Incentive Awards

Last July, Governor Stan Stephens presented incentive awards totaling almost \$7,000 to five department employees.

**Carl Gress**, Truck Driver and **Donald May**, Field Maintenance Supervisor, both from Ashland, received \$83 each for jointly suggesting using an adjustable counter balance for erecting and taking down large fold-up signs. Their suggestion is expected to save approximately \$1,666 each year.

**William Pedula**, Field Main-

tenance Supervisor from Big Timber, received \$750 for suggesting using two-faced signs for various temporary maintenance jobs. This suggestion is expected to save approximately \$7,500 each year.

**Dennis Dupre**, Software Specialist from Helena, received \$3,000 for suggesting a cost-savings method for computer hardware maintenance. His suggestion is expected to save about \$30,000 each year until the equipment is replaced.

**Robert Fischer**, Utility Agent

from Butte, also received \$3,000 for developing neoprene signs and a portable sign stand. His suggestion, which will be implemented statewide and patented by the department, is expected to save the agency nearly \$325,000 each year.

Fischer's design was also chosen for national recognition by the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) and an "insider" commented Fischer's design was better than anything else entered in the SHRP competition. ♦

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## From the Director

**Don Lovely** started work recently on his new assignment in connection with Governor Stephens' request to study creation of a Montana Department of Transportation. The study is being directed by the Highway Commission, but Don will be doing the leg work and using his experience and knowledge of the department to assist the commissioners in their study.

I look forward to this study as a chance to get some of the issues we've been discussing out on the table and look at new ideas. I'm particularly interested in what we might do about the pay plan—there's an obvious need to improve it. And we'll also be looking at the interaction between headquarters and the field offices, morale within the department and some long-term issues such as the course of action to follow after depletion of the Reconstruction Trust Fund in 1993.

Some people think the department doesn't do anything right, but that isn't true and this will be a good chance to set the record straight while stepping back and taking a look at how the department operates.

We've got a great deal to be proud of. Recently we put together a list of "six-month accomplishments" that serves as a good reminder we are accomplishing our goals. For those of you who haven't seen it, the summary follows:

- The department survived the most serious, severe winter season of the decade with a minimum of complaints or incidents. State roads remained open to traffic despite the severe conditions and the public received very good service.

- Changes in the Engineering

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## The Extra Mile

Two recent instances underscore the fact that highway employees can be counted on when misfortune or catastrophe strikes. There are many aspects to public service and often the good deeds go unnoticed, but sometimes they don't. The following accounts show that the willingness and dedication to help has no bounds.

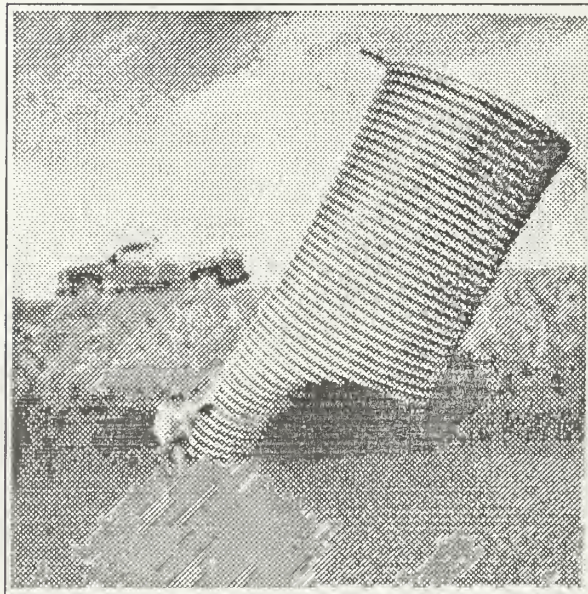
On July 13, a semi-truck hauling about 7,500 gallons of crude oil rolled on Interstate 94 near Billings, spilling most of its load and severely injuring the driver.

**Carl Howard**, an equipment operator for the Highway Department, was working with a department crew nearby. He pulled the driver, James Van Ruth, from the oil-filled ditch along the interstate. Van Ruth had swallowed a great deal of crude oil, and at least two other people had walked by him in the ditch, not realizing he was submerged in the oil. Howard spotted him, cleared the oil from his mouth and administered CPR and first aid to restore Van Ruth's breathing. With crude oil everywhere on a hot July day, there could have easily been a fire. But Howard risked his own life and used his training and personal strength to save James Van Ruth.

On Thursday, September 28, an automobile carrying two women and two children plunged over a near-vertical 45 foot bank into the Missouri River in Great Falls. The car landed upside down in three feet of water. One woman escaped from the overturned vehicle. The other woman and one child were pulled from the automobile by rescue workers.

A Department of Highways survey crew was working on River Road very near the scene of the accident and as they prepared to help with the overturned vehicle, they sighted two-year-old Whitney Myre floating face down in the river 100 yards downstream. Engineer Technician **Greg Avent** retrieved the little girl and, upon finding no pulse, began to administer CPR. By the time professional help arrived, little Whitney had a pulse and was coughing. Although in critical condition, the child survived.

These two instances are outstanding examples of the real-life dramas that can happen any where, any time. "I just thank the Lord I was there," a newspaper reporter quoted Greg Avent as saying following the rescue. ♦



*On August 30, 1989, the Glendive area received almost three inches of rain in less than an hour. Shown is the end of a culvert on a secondary road near Hodges, about 21 miles east of Glendive. The force of the water in the road ditch forced the end of the culvert up. Sectionman Larry Nistler of Wibaux is inspecting the damage to the culvert.*



# News from Missoula

by *Martha Vogt*

## NEW STAFF IN CENTRALIZED SERVICES

This summer was another baby boom for the Highway Department, with both **Erica Allen** and **Louise McChesney** pregnant simultaneously, and who also job share one position. Louise decided to deliver a month early, just before year-end closing. (Some people will do anything to get out of year end!) The father of the newborn Ryan, **Bill McChesney**, Field Maintenance Supervisor of Evaro, celebrated by landing a promotion to the Kalispell Division as Maintenance Foreman. So Louise and kids packed up and moved to Kalispell to join Bill.

This left Erica with two months left to go, working up to the day before her little girl (Paige) was born. With two kids now, Erica and her husband found a job as apartment managers so Erica could be at home. Paige is the first girl child born to a Missoula Highway employee in an unknown amount of years.

We've thought about opening a fertility clinic here in Missoula. It must be the water.

We also had a promotion for **Nancy Edwards**, from Accounting Tech to Assistant Utility Agent. **Margaret Burke**, the former agent, moved to Portland, Oregon to continue her education. **Bill Asher**, Accounting Clerk, landed Nancy's old position as Accounting Tech. **Margaret Hall** also left to take a job locally that would allow her more time with her one year old son, Chris.

As a result of all these vacancies, we managed to snatch **Becky Beckert** away from GVV in Helena to an accounting position here in Missoula. She, too, is continuing her education in the evenings at U of M. Welcome, Becky.

We warned her about the water in Missoula...

We also have hired two other accounting clerks, **Anita Bond** and **Vicki Tade**, just in time to learn the new on-line claims process. They've caught on quickly - welcome aboard. With almost a whole new staff and new systems, we're all coping well. Just don't drink the water.

## NEW CADD SYSTEM

In February, 1989, the Missoula District received the first CADD system in the field. A special room was constructed in the design area, complete with its own air conditioning system. A crane was used to move the system to its home on the second level of the Missoula Highways building. The designers and technicians received one week of formal training, then practiced on the CADD by rotating on an hourly basis from 6 am to 7:30 pm, learning how the computer works, how to operate all the functions and learning to draw with CADD. After getting comfortable, there were three days of more technical training. Presently, the four designers and technicians rotate four hours on the system and do 95 percent of the drafting on CADD. There is a plotter here that does half size plans. Full size plans are uploaded to the printer in Helena.

As part of the CADD, there is a stand alone workstation with hookup to the VAX system in Helena. The designers can sign onto the VAX, download a file to the local CADD, work on it, then upload it back to Helena for storage.

Plan sheets, summaries, details are all on files in Helena for immediate access. In many cases, they use existing drawings on CADD and just modify as needed. In addition, the CADD system can handle complex design computations by drawing only. There is no need to mail plans to Helena anymore, just let them

know the file name to retrieve. There is no duplication of plan drawings for Traffic, Right of Way, Utilities, etc. Changes can be made with a ZAP, and its redone.

There are a few problems encountered occasionally, such as phone line access, changes made in the system in Helena which may not be compatible in the district CADD. Also there's a technical void with converting survey data from field notes. In the future, there may be a way to load data directly from the survey to the CADD system without human entry. The CADD system does require extensive training to become proficient. It is estimated that after three years of CADD training, one technician on the CADD can do the work of three drafting people using pen and ink.

## TROY-LIBBY

The largest project in the history of the Department of Highways is underway between Troy and Libby in northwest Montana. The 15-mile, \$19 million project is being built by Washington Construction Company of Missoula. The project is scheduled to be completed by late next summer.

Fitting a primary highway through a narrow, solid rock canyon with a river and a railroad has proven to be a real challenge. Throw in summer tourist traffic and a total lack of detours to make for a very "interesting" summer for Project Managers **Jim Mitchell** and **Gary Kalberg** and their hard-working crew.

The specifications allowed for two-hour closures. The worst blast to date had the road closed for seven hours and the railroad closed for two hours. A terrific public relations and information program, however, has kept complaints to a minimum. Most of the locals have adjusted well and are looking forward to the new highway. ♦



*Ever wonder where you could hear a really good band in Helena? Tired of having your brains fried by heavy metal or hearing about "cheating hearts?"*

*Well, get ready to rock 'n roll. The Average Brothers are coming to Helena for the 1989 Highway Department Christmas Party.*

*From what we hear, the Average Brothers are anything but average. This band includes two respected attorneys from Kalispell, Steve Nardi and Bill Hileman; an insurance executive, Chuck McDowell; Jack Schultz, a manager at Grouse Mountain Resort; and Phelps L' Hommedieu, owner of the Palace Bar in Whitefish.*

*They are also talented musicians who offer four sets during their show complete with authentic costumes: a Beatles segment, an early British set, a beach party set and a "Freak Set."*

*So put December 15 on your calendar and join the fun at the Civic Center. Buy your tickets early from any HEBA board member and BE THERE OR BE SQUARE!*

## Cail Wins Transportation Week Race

This was the fourth win for **Tim Cail** in the 10-K National Transportation Week Road Race Challenge since the race was first held in 1981. **Ed Eschler** was the second male to cross the finish line this year, followed by **Bob Tholt**.

Top women finishers in the 10-K were **Doreen Harding**, **Joanie Kaiser** and **Debbie Erving**.

**Monte Smith** and **Lisa Martin** scored victories in the 5-K competition. Martin was followed by **Beate Galda** and **Betty Foley**. **Rex Hoy** placed second in the men's division. **Randy Roch** and **Ed Sieck** tied for third.

**Jama Martin** was the first to break the tape in the one-mile race, and **Khristy Shigley** and **Carina Zook** followed in second and third place. In the men's competition, **Jim Bramlette** was the first to cross the line.

In the team competition, first place honors went to the Three Computers (**Cayle Wingard**, **Dorothy Cail** and **Carina Zook**) in the one-mile race and the Flying Pit Bulls (**Ed Sieck**, **Rancy Roch** and **Monte Smith**) in the 5-K.

The National Transportation Week Road Race Challenge is held annually during National Transportation Week. Last year, 16 states participated in the challenge.

## Retirements

Recently retiring with over 30 years with the department were:

**Frank Caprara, Jr.**, 39 years, 9 months; **Robert A. Strainer**, 38 years, 6 months; **Keith L. Benson**, 33 years, 5 months; **Joseph W. Bettle**, 33 years, 3 months; **Walter B. Devoy**, 33 years; **Frank L. Foltz**, 33 years; **Ross M. Johnson**, 32 years, 10 months; **James T. Brown**, 32 years, 8 months; **Robert G. Chapman**, 34 years, 6 months; **Leon E. Peterson**, 32 years, 9 months; **Floyd H. Grubb**, 32 years, 4 months; **Donald A. Hinman**, 31 years, 9 months; **Sheldon W. Stoner**, 31 years, 5 months; **Gary W. Dees**, 31 years, 1 month; **John L. Prebil**, 31 years; **Audrey G. Bridges**, 30 years, 7 months; **Allen C. Stenhjem**, 30 years, 4 months; **David C. Holmberg**, 30 years, 3 months.

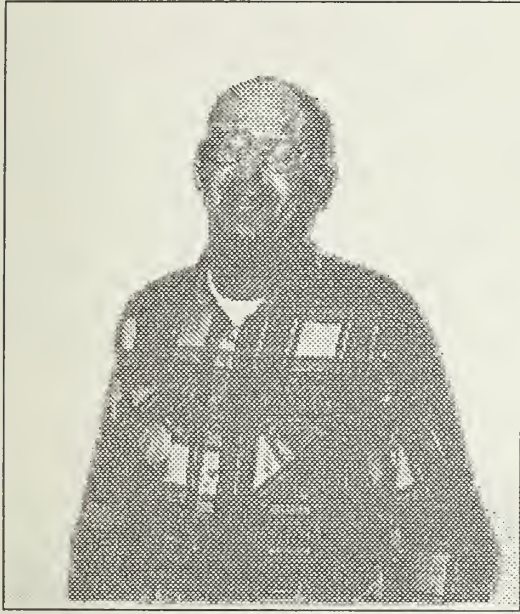
Those with over 20 years include:

**Albert L. McComb**, 29 years, 8 months; **Donald E. Winfield**, 29 years, 7 months; **Douglas A. Durocher**, 28 years, 11 months; **Gerald Charlton**, 28 years, 9 months; **George E. McCammon**, 28 years, 8 months; **Raymond F. Swanson**, 28 years, 7 months; **Richard F. Gove**, 28 years, 6 months; **Paul V. Nicholson**, 28 years, 6 months; **Murray L. Swenson**, 28 years, 5 months; **Kenneth P. Baisch**, 28 years, 5 months; **James L. Jones**, 27 years, 5 months; **Dick R. Rogers**, 27 years, 1 month; **Pearl H. Mart**, 26 years, 10 months; **Ronald J. Sprague**, 26 years, 8 months; **Gerald A. Boone**, 26 years, 7 months; **Carr L. Cleveland**, 26 years, 7 months; **Raymond S. Webb**, 26 years, 6 months; **Wilbur E. Frickel**, 26 years, 4 months; **Raymond D. Eustice**, 25 years, 6 months; **David E. Milot**, 25 years, 6 months; **Ralph F. Lee**, 25 years, 6 months; **Mary M. Phelps**, 25 years, 5 months; **Glenn A. Porter**, 25 years, 5 months; **Jon Schwefel**, 25 years, 5 months; **James H. Krantz**, 24 years, 11 months; **Michael G. Mueller**, 24 years, 3 months;

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# Mileposts



*Jim Baldwin, Field Project Manager at Culbertson, recently received an award for 40 years service with the Department of Highways. Since May of 1948, Jim has used his talents in many positions and areas throughout the state. Thanks, Jim, for your years of service.*

Other service awards were presented recently to:

**35 years:** Hazen Flickinger; Bruce Russell.

**30 years:** Shirley Farley; James Green; David Holmberg; David Kwasney; Eugene McMahon; Robert Scherting; Robert Maas; Frank Dunn; Robert Disney; Donald Loveless; Walter Deighton; Donald Doner; Robert Lambert.

**25 years:** Richard Allen; Raymond Eustice; John Knowles; Ambrose Purkett; David Balkovetz; Clarence Christensen; Robert Evans; Robert Fischer; Robert Lajoie; Jerry Stevens; Dan Clark; Daryell Cogdill; Theodore Herman; Mardella Vaagen; Richard Hamel; Wayne Walters; Ken Skoog; James Krantz; David Schuman; Roy Kidder; Earle Mayberry; John Maykuth.

**20 years:** Leon Eide; Terry Held; Ted Selon; John Smith; Florence Buzzas; Donald Niles; John Yeoman; Ronald Arthur; Michael Davis; Thomas Davis; Joe Finch; Michael Friedrich; James Lauckner; James Blossom; Gary Cloninger; Patrick Gerrells; Larry Kiefer; Patricia Letendre; Leta Yuricic; John

Horton; Richard Price; Rick Rogne; Perry Eidum; William Brazill; Sandra Dargan; John Davis; John Gregory; Stephen Miller; Andy Powell; Orville Siegle; James Smola; Myron Wilson.

**15 years:** Robert Johnson; William Linn; Danny Miller; Terry Yarger; William Burton; Timothy Darr; Arthur Davis; Richard Holmes; Michael Randall; Robert Carter; Irene Ersness; James Ruegsegger; Walter Franke; Robert Vander-sloot; William Leary; Richard Capp; Debbie Darragh; Norma Rabey; James Racicot; William Fullerton; David Kaste; Harold McLaughlin; Michael Smith.

**10 years:** Daniel Kiely; Michael MacDonald; Harold Mohn; Shirley Neuhardt; Patricia Stevens; Madonna Barber; Randall Delude; Charlie Eddlemon; Robert Harding; Thomas Keating; Thomas McCormick; Edward Reber;

Francis Rice; Richard Rust; Rickey Shibley; John Wise, Jr.; John Andrew; Judy Bauch; Sandra Dorsett; Paul Liming; Francis Martin; Roger Nelson; Peggy Neuberger; Edwin Oats; Charles Regalado; Kenneth Rose; Victor Schatz; Lester Stradtman; Gary Thompson; Patrick Tubbs; William Balbinot; Paul Bell; Raymond Blohm; Jackie Cox; Jay Harvey; Elmer Malkuch; Eugene Nistler; John Schuler; Karl Berry; Michael Caywood; Patrick Hastie; Dorie Heckathorn; Jonathan Kaufmann; Clayton McElravy; Dawn Quinn; Jim Richman; James Watkins; Mark White; Patricia Zimmerman; Lee Alt; Jack Federer; Stephen Johnson; Gerald Murray; Larry Ray; Calvin Frank; Richard Kauffman; Robert Manweiler; Ronald Stene; Jerome Anseth; Richard Barnes; Jerry Erickson; Floyd Forsberg; Richard Lawson; Deborah Shupak.

**5 years:** Martin Almli; Scott Covington; Robert Damm; Dennis Eddlemon; Stanley Kuntz; Martin Lande; Lonnie Larson; Anna Miller; James Mullins; Gerald Oster; Kathleen Palmer; Richard Petersen; Walter Scott; Walter Sott; Eugene Stettler;

Linda Wall; John Wilke; Michael Wilson; Bobby Wriston; Jeff Applin; Jeffrey Bisson; Robert Cummings; Robert Custer; Joni Hellen; Thomas Kelly; Marlin Metcalf; Danny Novak; Donald Reisinger; Russell Schweitzer; Daniel Walls; James Fohl; Troy Holzworth; David Lancaster; Robert Little Wolf; Patrick Merwin; Douglas Park; Richard Savage; Larry Sayre; Peter Thelen; Edward Vogl; Michael Buckley; Allen Cormany; James Heikens; Michael Johnson; Gary Neville; Duane Nygard; Arthur Pankey; Karl Posnien; Rhett Richter; Rodney Rogge; Clark Umfleet; James Fitzpatrick; Lawrence Hunter; Tim Marin; Raymond Studebaker; Robert Thomson; Leila Williams; Thomas Buckley; Eddy Collins; Ricky Franklin; Carl Howard; Allen Jones; Donald Lindbom; Donald Moderie; Dwayne Rude; Terry Thiede; Leonard Zier; Tammy Erickson; Arthur McCafferty; Shaun O'Connor; Joseph Olsen; Diana Stouffer; Louis Coburn; Richard Dulaney; Kurt Flansaas; Stanley Gress; Thomas Hansen; Martin Lomahukluh; Jay Muhlbeier; Steven Nickel; Richard Reilly; Dean Sackett; Diane Tordale. ♦

## Highway Systems Studied

Denis Burke reports good progress on his study to document and analyze the department's project and financial management systems. Better access to information and integration of the systems are important goals of the effort.

A by-product of the study will be a "departmental systems manual" that covers the life-cycle of a highway project from start to finish. Copies will be available department-wide, according to Burke. ♦

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Division will shorten the time it takes to get construction projects ready for contract by several years. Using the "critical path method" as a basis, the current six or seven year lead time is being shortened to something on the order of three or four years.

- Roughly \$42 million in highway construction contracts were awarded to private contractors in the first six months of this year. Total contract awards for the year will likely be over \$100 million.

- The Troy-Libby project, the largest and one of the most difficult projects undertaken in Montana, is going smoothly and is well ahead of schedule. Traffic control is a critical part of the project due to the lack of a good detour route, but the extraordinary effort to inform the public and efficient work by the contractor and the department will lead to earlier completion and possible savings of \$1 million in traffic control costs.

- The department recently qualified for an additional \$5 million in federal highway funding. This funding became available under the "August grab bag" process whereby states that aren't able to use all their federal spending authority, for whatever reason, release it for use by other states (i.e., Montana) who are able to use it to let additional highway work to contract.

- Weigh stations throughout the state are now able to accept payment from truckers via credit card for permits and fees.

- Numerous accounting functions have been completely computerized over the past several months. The result is considerable time savings, quicker payment of invoices, contracts, employee compensation, etc., and significant cost savings to the state.

- The department's new centralized computer system is up and running, with the potential for more efficient use of information and data and substantial cost savings. The

system is designed to allow many users access to useful data that's now inaccessible. In addition, needs that were being met with relatively costly personal computers can now be met with inexpensive computer terminals.

- Since about the first of the year, computer-aided photogrammetry is being used wherever possible in project design. As a result, work that has taken a number of days or weeks to complete is being done now in a number of hours. The cost savings in this area has already covered the cost of the new equipment.

- Based on results of recent "on the road" measurements, the average condition of pavements on Montana's interstate highway system was significantly better in 1989 than it was when last measured in 1987. Similar results were reported last year for the state's primary highway system.

This is an impressive list and we've all had a part in the accomplishments. It'll be interesting to see what we have to report six months from now, particularly in light of the study being undertaken on creation of a Department of Transportation. It's something to look forward to. ♦



## RETIREMENTS

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**Joseph D. Pistelak**, 21 years, 8 months; **Robert G. Oedewaldt**, 21 years, 6 months;

Others recently retiring were: **Willis D. Griswold**, 19 years, 10 months; **Dallas W. Thompson**, 19 years, 7 months; **Jerome J. Teafoe**, 17 years, 8 months; **Mitchel Dereschuk**, 17 years, 5 months; **Daniel M. Ivankovich**, 14 years, 5 months; **Howard L. Williams**, 12 years, 4 months; **Walter A. Ardisson**, 10 years, 11 months; **Jack G. Coil**, 10 years, 6 months; **Charles G. Ritchart**, 10 years, 6 months; **Edward V. Reber**, 10 years, 5 months; **Jerry R. Livingston**, 9 years, 5 months; **Duane L. Meiers**, 7 years, 2 months. ♦

## Barrier Awareness

The Department of Highways was one of ten state agencies presented a certificate of appreciation earlier this year by the Montana Independent Living Project for participation in Barrier Awareness Week.

According to Sam Prestipino, the department's coordinator for handicapped concerns, a forum of physically handicapped highway employees was held in April. These employees were asked what problems this building presented for them. One improvement suggested was a handrail by the east entrance door to help them—and all of us—walk on icy days. Plans are to have the handrail installed before the snow flies this fall. ♦

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